DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 246 557 EA 017 028

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TITLE A Proposal for Excellence in Educational Administration.
PUB DATE 84
NOTE 16p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the National Conference of Professors of Educational Administration (Orono, ME, 1984).
PUB TYPE Viewpoints (120) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Administrator Education; *Administrator Role; Administrator Selection; *Educational Administration; *Educational Improvement; Elementary Secondary Education; Labor Turnover; *Leadership; Models; *Organizational Effectiveness; *Principals; Recruitment; Salaries; Tables (Data)

ABSTRACT

Numerous 1983-84 educational improvement studies emphasized the need for strong principal leadership, yet present reform efforts fail to address adequately principal preparation. This proposal for administrative excellence has a four-category focus: recruitment of those with strong liberal arts degrees; selection of those committed to an 11-month preparatory program to which districts contribute fiscal support and a mentor-supervisor; three-phase training for "expert power"; and retention/pay reforms, such as linking salaries to adult development stages rather than to length of service. Four pages of tables and three of references are included. (KS)

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ED246557

NCPEA 1984. Orono, Maine

A Proposal for Excellence in Educational Administration*

Introduction

1984. It may be remembered in education's chronology as the year of the excellence push. Late 1983 and early 1984 saw the publication of numerous reports and studies on the condition of education, on the need for excellence in education and on ways to improve education. The report of the National Commission on Excellence in Education garnered the most publicity (A Nation at Risk); its spectacular title and war and destruction metaphors may have added to its notoriety. Confidence in education has started back up. 1984.

1984. It may also be remembered as the year when enough information became available to put meaning into the expression, "As is the principal, so is the school" (Shoun, Lintz and Achilles, 1981). The "effective schools" work with its narrow (but overdue) focus on school outcomes is beginning to be felt. The numerous effective schooling studies point to the need for strong building leadership (usually the principal) and other indirect attributes of the principal: high and positive expectations for faculty and students, a safe and orderly climate conducive to learning, a focus on instruction in basic skills (with frequent monitoring of pupil progress). Other elements of this mandate for leadership include community involvement, staff development, etc. Things known to educators, but diverted in past years. 1984.

1984. It is the year for some new challenges and for new, bold efforts. Some directions have been set; educators, however, still need vision

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The Need is Clear.

Many of the national studies identified the need for improved leadership in our schools, and particularly the need both for identifying better models for preparing principals, and for developing a cadre of highly competent school principals. Although this need has been identified in many national studies, for whatever reason, the current wave of educational reform is not addressing the issue of principal preparation adequately. Several authors and studies have encapsulated this national problem succinctly. Note Goodlad:

> "Two rarely practiced procedures...are basic to correcting the sloppiness and upgrading both the status of the principalship and the quality of those that aspire to it. First, there should be a continuous district-wide effort to identify employees with leadership potential. Second, the district must be willing to make an investment designed to pay off in the future.... Once identified as promising, potential candidates should be ...scheduled for paid two-year study leaves, to be taken at major universities offering a carefully planned program" (Goodlad, 1984: 306-307. Emphasis added.)

The notion described by Goodlad is also a major contention of Baltzell and Dentler's (1983) National Institute of Education (NIE) study, "Selecting American School Principals." The need, then, is one of national significance.

The principalship is key to reform in American education. Yet, many perceive this as an entry-level administration position, and seldom is much attention paid to selection and screening for the principalship. Further, prospective principals traditionally have selected courses almost at random, attended school part-time, and through self-selection have typically "just fallen into" the principalship. This nearly random practice has not always provided the best training and results.

The National Commission on Excellence in Education addressed the problem of leadership in American schools by Recommendation E, "Leadership and Federal Support," in A Nation At Risk. In part, this 1983 recommendation said:

> Principals and superintendents must play a crucial leadership role in developing school and community support for the reforms we propose, and school boards must provide them with the professional development and other support required to carry out their leadership role effectively. ...School boards must consciously develop leadership skills at the school and district levels if the reforms we propose are to be achieved.

The Commission notes that it is the part of the Federal Government to provide "student financial assistance and research and graduate training" to help attain this leadership goal.

Table 1, reproduced from Griesemer and Butler (1983) Education Under Study, shows that eight out of nine major education-reform reports consider school organization and management as a critical area for attention if we are to improve education. Table 2, from a Phi Delta Kappa study and reported by Clark, et.al. (1980) shows that leadership as a factor associated with school success has been identified by case studies, literature and research reviews, and by experts in the field. That Kappan study indicates that "the behavior of the designated school or program leader is crucial in determining school success," and that "the leader's attitude toward...education and expectations for school...success determines the impact of the leader on exceptional schools" (Clark, et. al., 468).

A Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) study (Cornett, 1983) notes that "schools in which student learning exceeds the predicted levels of learning for the student population are defined as effective schools, and principals within these schools have emerged as an important factor in determining the effectiveness" (3). The SREB report discusses preparation programs for schools administrators:

> Colleges need to develop programs solidly grounded in theory, but which also include some practicality. Internships, offered in full cooperation with school districts, are one solution. An additional approach might be a program that includes some of the knowledge-based work which is best

TABLE 1

Reproduction of Table Showing Consensus of Major Studies on Need for Attention to Improving School Leadership

Critical Areas of Recommendations from the Nine Major Reports

	ACADEMIC PREPARATION FOR COLLEGE The College Board	ACTION FOR EXCELLENCE Education Commission of the States	AMERICA'S COMPETITIVE CHALLENGE Business-Higher Education Forum	HIGH SCHOOL Ernest L. Boyer	MAKING THE GRADE The Twentieth Century Fund	A NATION AT RISK Commission on Excellence	THE PAIDEIA PROPOSAL Mortimer J. Adler	A PLACE CALLED SCHOOL John I. Goodlad	A STUDY OF HIGH SCHOOLS Theodore Sizer
School Organization and Management		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓+	✓+	✓+
Curriculum	✓+	✓	✓	✓+	✓+	✓+	✓+	✓+	✓
Students and Learning	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓+	✓+	✓+
Quality and Equality	✓	✓		✓	✓+	✓	✓	✓	✓
Teachers and Teaching	✓	✓	✓	✓+	✓	✓+	✓	✓	✓
Postsecondary Education	✓	✓	✓+	✓		✓		✓	
Leadership									
Local Role	✓	✓+	✓	✓+	✓	✓+		✓	
State Role	✓	✓+	✓	✓	✓	✓+		✓	
Federal Role		✓	✓+	✓	✓+	✓+			
Business & Industry		✓	✓+	✓+		✓			
Research			✓		✓+	✓+			

✓ indicates that the report discusses and/or advances recommendations for action on the theme.
✓+ indicates that the report particularly emphasizes the theme.

*pp. 63-65

Education Under Study, 1983, p. 5.

TABLE 2

Factors Associated with School Success, Showing Leadership Emphasis (Clark, et.al., 1980:468)

Summary of Findings About Factors Associated with Exceptionality in Urban Elementary Schools

Factors Associated with School or Program Success	Strength of Finding by Substudy (See Key Below) Case Lit.	Res. Lit.	Experts
Leadership			
1. Leadership style or behavior	+	+ +	+ +
2. Leader attitude toward urban education, expectations	+	+	+
Teaching Personnel			
1. Staff development, inservice training	+ +	+ +	+
2. Specificity and focus of training, e.g., program or project goals and processes	+ +	+	0
3. Reductions in adult/child ratios	+ +	+ +	+
Finance: Special Project Funding	+ +	+ +	+
Resources and Facilities	0	0	0
Curriculum and Instruction			
1. Emphasis on reading and math achievement	+ +	+ +	+
2. Structured learning environment	+		+
3. Individualized instruction	+ +	+	0
Community Resources			
Parental contact and involvement in school activities	+	+ +	+

+ + Strong support for positive relationship
+ Modest support for positive relationship
0 No relationship supported

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taught in the university setting and more practical courses which would be taught by practicing administrators (Cornett, 1983:14).

Finn (1984:521) says "Develop effective school-level leadership by selecting and nurturing first-rate principals...." Hodgkinson (1982:42) says "The individual school site is the basic unit of educational change and improvement, making the principal the most vital leader in the improvement of public schools." This list goes on. The References and Bibliography section includes other studies reporting that if we expect better schools, we must pay immediate attention to problems of principal selection and preparation.

Recently the declining quality of teachers has been highlighted (Schlechty and Vance, 1981; Vance and Schlechty, 1982; Sykes, 1983). Principals, however, come from the ranks of teachers, and declining teacher quality will soon lead to a deterioration of educational leadership. This problem needs attention, post haste, pronto. (Right damn now!)

Colleges and universities must adjust. Many have reserved their advanced courses and financial assistance for doctoral candidates preparing for university teaching positions. Universities must reallocate resources to: 1) increase attention to persons preparing for the principalship, 2) distribute financial support for full-time students preparing for the principalship, and 3) to develop and use model programs for the principalship.

A Not-So-Modest Proposal (Swiftly Made!)

My proposal for excellence in educational administration focuses on the arena where there is the greatest number of administrators, and hence the greatest opportunity for excellence: the principalship. The proposal has four parts that flow from the need and some of the recommendations:

1. Recruitment
2. Selection
3. Training
4. Retention/Pay.

Recruitment. Principals-to-be must be recruited carefully. They will be from prestige schools (Sykes, 1983; Federal Reserve Bank Study, 1975). They will score low on the National Teacher Exam (NTE) (Federal Reserve Study). Each will have a strong liberal arts degree in a substantive discipline, for research (Beck, 1981) has shown that those with liberal arts degrees are the most successful leaders and managers. Recruitment will be a cooperative effort between the local school system and the university (Goodlad, 1983).

Selection. The final selection, from those recruited and eligible, will be made from some very definite commitment. Those selected must plan to attend a full-time preparation program for two summers and one academic year (Goodlad, 1983). This is individual commitment. The sending district must agree to participate in the training by providing 1) substantial fiscal support for the candidate, 2) an internship or field-based site for key aspects of the candidate's training, 3) an outstanding practicing administrator who will be a mentor-supervisor and team member in the training, and 4) some assurance of employment after the training program. This is the district's commitment.*

Training. Training will have a three-point focus (Achilles, 1981):

Generalist	Specialist	Expert
Liberal Arts Humanities Administration as Art The "Why."	Administration Technology Administration as Science The "How To."	The What; To become an expert in some key aspect of education.

The principal will become an Expert in some key aspect of instruction (e.g., reading, science), in the tradition of master or lead teacher. This will give the principal "expert power," and provide a basis for 1) modeling appropriate behaviors and 2) setting effective norms for the school (Strother, 1983).

The principal will learn how to establish important bases of power--expert, norm setting, referrent, use of legitimate authority (French and Raven, 1959).

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*Numerous sources support this: Achilles, 1981; Achilles and Hughes, 1972; Baltzell and Dentler, 1983; Cornett, 1983; Finn, 1984; Sykes, 1983; etc.

The humanities will add background and depth. They won't be humanities qua humanities, but humanities with a focus on education and educational issues: a pragmatic or instrumental value for the humanities!

Administration as a science (specialist) will include tools, tasks and processes of administration. The principal will, through training and skill development, be able to eschew the time-worn expression, "Do as I say, not as I do," and replace it with "Do as I do and as I say on these important educational issues that I am modeling for you" (Achilles and Keedy, 1983; High, 1984).

Training will move through three distinct phases, employing three types of instruction and processes, and be conducted in different sites or locations. This is a planned program, based on theory and experience, and combining theory with practice at the job setting--the school. The "pairing" of the trainee and experienced administrator provides unusual flexibility, economy, and opportunity for training excellence (Achilles and Hughes, 1972).

Figure 1 shows the underlying conceptual model for the planned training sequence. Activities move through this in a carefully coordinated flow. Figure 2 expands on the detail of the training and captures the theoretic base of Katz' (1974) three modes or skill areas: human, technical, and conceptual. Figure 3 outlines (for the quarter system) the "pairing" of a new administrator (A) and an experienced administrator (B) for project operation. This provides preservice and inservice programming and involves the local system in field-based efforts (Achilles and Hughes, 1972; Achilles and Norman, 1974).

Retention/Pay

To address the problem of excellence in educational administration we must break with tradition; we must consider some radical new ideas. We should consider theory and apply reason. For example, tradition offers a pay schedule that rises in a more-or-less straight line in slow increments over time.

Change Steps	Training	Process	Setting/Delivery	Time in Project	Primary Setting
Awareness/ Interest	Familiarity Conceptual Control	Large-group, Primarily one-way communication.	Classes, reading	Summer Fall	On-Campus
Initiation		Dissemination			
Evaluation/ Trial Implementation	Understanding Acquisition of Skill	Small-group, Question/ Answer. Observation and limited practice.	Visits, Demonstration. Field projects. Action research.	School opening Winter	Campus School Visits
		Demonstration			
Actual Use Incorporation	Implementation Transfer of Skill	One-to-one, "Hands-on", coaching. Guided practice in real settings.	Internship. Initiation of new effort. Self-evaluation and assessment.	Spring	School
		Diffusion		Summer	School and Campus

Figure 1. Conceptual Model Showing Underlying Training Modes Moving from Classroom Effort (Conceptual Control) to School-site Practice (Implementation of Change).

Training Focus	Skill (Katz)			Delivery Mode	Site/Mode
	Conceptual	Technical	Human		
I. Familiarity and Conceptual Control.	I	I	I	I. Classes, Seminars, Reading. Problem-Definition.	Campus. Group work.
II. Understanding, Skill Building. Implementation.		II	II	II. Visits, Observation, Demonstrations. Action Research. Seek Alternatives	Campus and Field. Small group and individual work.
III. Incorporation. Transfer of Skill.	II	III	III	III. Internship, Practicum. Problem-Solving, Change. Implement new programs.	Field. Individual work.
	III				

Figure 2. Diagram of Training Framework Showing Emphasis on Skills (Katz, 1974) at Each Level (I, II, III) of Training Focus.

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TIME BLOCKS

Location	Summer	Assessment Ctr / Workshop	School Opening	Fall	Workshop	Winter	Workshop (alternate)	Spring	Summer	Assessment (post)	Credit Range
On Campus	A	A, A, B		A	A, B		A, B	B			
In District			A, B	B		A, B		A			
Credit											
A	12	3	3	12	3-6	6 6-9	3-6	3-6 6-9	optioral		54-66
B		3			3-6	3 or 3	3-6	optional			9-15

A = New Administrator
B = Experienced Admin.
□ = On Campus
○ = In district
Numbers = Quarter hours of credit

Figure 3. Diagram of "Pairing" arrangement showing location of new and Experienced administrators during academic year.

Theory on motivation and on adult life stages points to other directions. Research, theory and tradition all must speak to us. It does not take a computer to project a pretty dismal scenario based on research in administration and on the now-documented decline in teaching quality. (E.g., Schlechty and Vance; Vance and Schlechty; etc. See References.) What happens when we justapose these generalizations? They suggest that if we hope to improve administrators we must consider administrative pay and the impact of the current pay structure. We must attract and retain the best.

Those who stay in the principalship (or in administration, for that matter) tend to be highly conservative (not risk-takers), obedient of authority, and often get there mostly on perseverance (Schneider; the Schlechty and Vance studies; etc.). This bodes ill. There does seem to be something we can learn from industry. If we want to nurture and retain our best people in administration in education, we should consider a salary schedule that does something other than reward longevity. Administrative pay tied to merit would be controversial. There may be other options that are as good, and if tied only loosely to merit, may even be better. A logical plan would tie administrative pay to such things as stages of adult development or to years of peak productivity (in the sense of energy, experience, and vigor).

The pay should rise rapidly (Fast Track), reaching a peak plateau in a few years. It will stay at this high plateau for some time (with some cost-of-living provisions) and then begin a gradual decline in actual pay dollars in later years. As part of this pay plan to attract good people and keep them in administration longer, the system will include an annuity as part of the plan. The school system would pay annuity dollars into a fund which, when the salary peaks and/or begins its decline, would then be used to supplement the tax dollars and keep the salary high. After a set time (10 years?)

the person would be vested and would keep the annuity. If the persons leave early, the district will retain the annuity dollars. This would provide a salary curve such as the one shown in Figure 4. Fringe benefits would change and reflect needs as people get older. (Variable fringes! This idea deserves considerable attention and study.)

This plan fits with adult development or life stages. It also reflects changing needs in fringe benefits; fringes will be variable and reflect needs of the changing ages and adult life styles (better health services in later years; reduced tuition for post-secondary education in the middle years; etc.).

Nothing new, really. Perhaps just a revision of some prior ideas, or the blending of what we already know in a slightly different way. Recruit. Select. Train. Retain. The rubrics and framework are old hat. We may need to put a new engine in the old chassis. Evolution, not revolution. (Ah, 1984).

So--our plan may help. It offers some radical departures from current practice. It is based on theory and current knowledge. It meets head-on some of the problems and concerns of the current studies in education by using remedies suggested by these very studies. 1984? Maybe not!

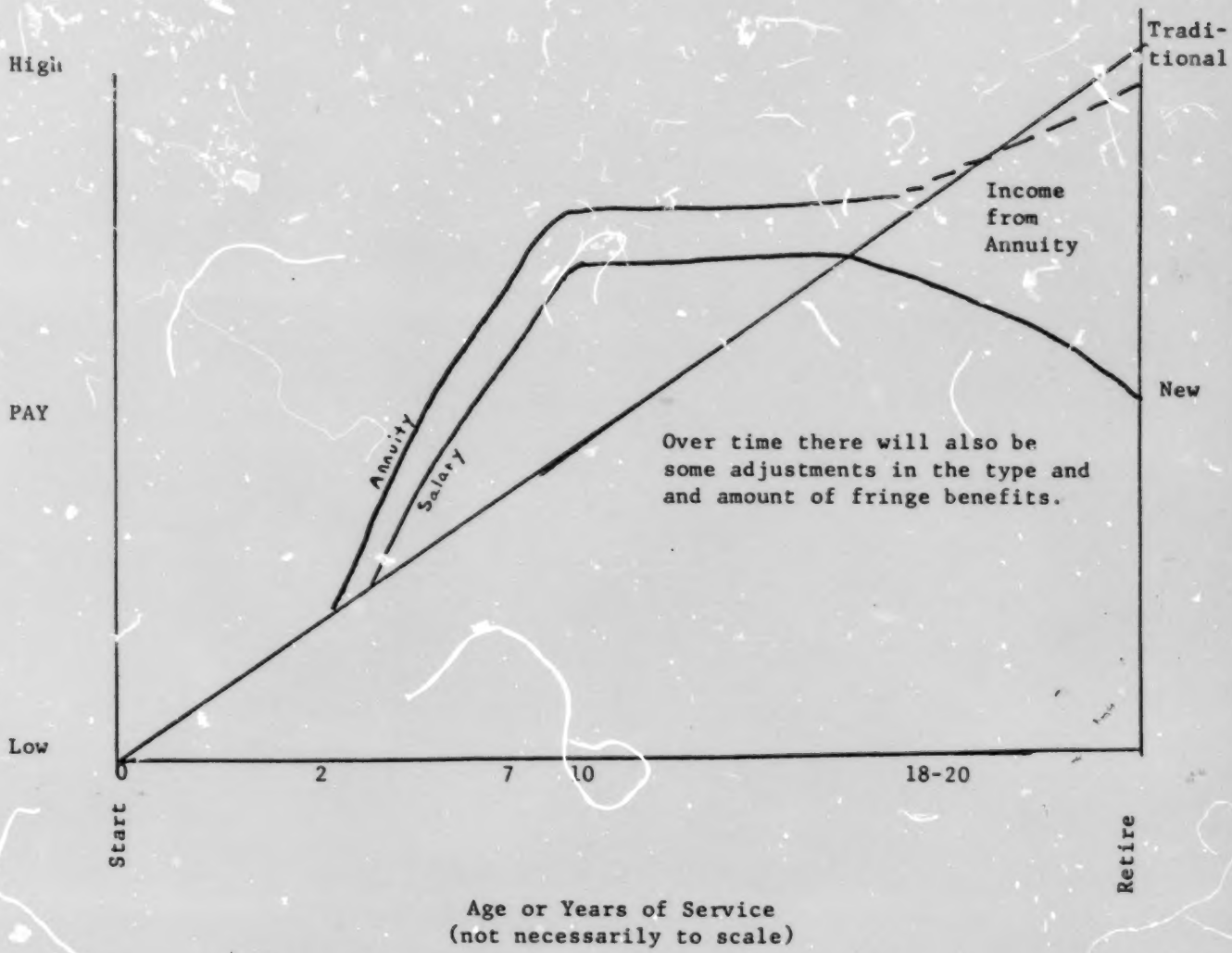

Figure 4. Suggested salary curve for educational administrators. Annuity funds to be paid by district and each participant would have "shares," similar to TIAA-CREF.

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